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TAGS: [UNSC](#) [PREL](#) [SO](#)
SUBJECT: UNSC BEGINS DISCUSSION ON UN CONTINGENCY PLANNING
FOR A SOMALIA PKO

REF: A. UN SYG REPORT S/2007/204
[1](#)B. LEVINSON/VAN BRANDT EMAIL 4/24/07

Classified By: Ambassador Jackie Sanders for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Following an April 24 briefing by UN officials, EU delegations led by France, Belgium and Italy voiced objections to allowing the UN to begin contingency planning for a peacekeeping operation in Somalia. The U.S., Slovakia, Congo, Ghana, South Africa and African Union (AU) Permanent Observer Lila Ratsifandri-Hamanana called for the UN to begin preparations for a peacekeeping operation and for member states to provide assistance to AMISOM. Russia expressed qualified support for the UN to begin planning for a UN PKO. China did not state a strong policy position. Peru, Panama, and Indonesia did not stake a position on the issue, but echoed the concerns of other delegations that all parties to the conflict must allow unfettered humanitarian access. UKUN announced its intention to put forward a PRST authorizing the SYG to begin contingency planning for a UN PKO in Somalia. END SUMMARY.

DPA, DPKO, OCHA Brief the
Council In Informal Session

[1](#)2. (U) UKUN convened the meeting on Somalia as an informal session of the Council to allow the African Union Permanent Observer mission to participate. DPA A/SYG Tuliameni Kalomoh and DPKO A/SYG Dimitri Titov opened the meeting by outlining the principal political and security recommendations made in the SYG's report on the situation in Somalia (ref A). Kalomoh said that while conditions for a UN PKO were not currently present in Somalia, the SYG could begin contingency planning for a UN follow on mission with Council approval.

[1](#)3. (U) Following the briefing on the technical assessment mission, OCHA U/SYG John Holmes briefed the Council on the growing humanitarian crisis in Somalia and allegations that parties to the conflict have violated international humanitarian law by preventing assistance from reaching affected populations. Holmes estimated that 320,000 people have been displaced in Somalia as a result of the fighting and called it the "worst humanitarian crisis so far this year." Holmes stopped short of accusing the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of willfully breaching international law, but commented that the TFG had put "too many obstacles and administrative hindrances" in the way of assistance. France, Qatar, Italy, Belgium and South Africa, however, criticized the TFG directly for preventing assistance from reaching the needy.

The AU Makes the Case

14. (C) AU Permanent Observer Lila Ratsifandri-Hamanana made the case for greater UN involvement in Somalia. The AU has committed stabilization forces and political backing for the National Reconciliation Congress, but lacks the resources to provide security. Ambassador Ratsifandri-Hamanana emphasized that the January 19 AU PSC communique gave AMISOM a finite mandate and the Council needs to begin preparations immediately in order to avoid a security vacuum. (COMMENT: UKUN contacts indicated to us that they chose the informal meeting format to ensure that the Council heard the AU position favoring a UN follow on mission. During the January negotiations on UNSCR 1744, the AU delegations -- Ghana, Congo and South Africa -- did not play an active role in the negotiations or present a unified position on the need for a quick transition from AMISOM to a UN PKO. END COMMENT)

UK Planning Somalia PRST

15. (C) Italy, France and Belgium voiced opposition to contingency planning for a UN PKO for Somalia, arguing that it would be inappropriate for the UN to prejudice a Council decision on a peacekeeping mission by beginning planning. (NOTE: Privately, the French and Belgian experts have told us that they share DPKO's concerns about the viability of deploying a PKO into a security environment as hostile as Somalia. Likewise, they are reticent to commit UN forces before AMISOM fully deploys. END NOTE) U.S. AMB Sanders responded that the UN must begin appropriate contingency planning for a possible UN mission so that the UN is prepared to deploy if and when conditions on the ground permit.

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Slovakia, Ghana, Congo and South Africa concurred, calling on the UN to begin contingency planning and for member states to support AMISOM.

16. (U) Russia intervened and suggested that contingency planning could begin provided it was "low key" and did not prejudice future Council consideration of the issue. China and Qatar made no strong policy statement regarding the potential transition to a UN mission. Peru, Panama, and Indonesia focused their comments on the need to support a viable political process and AMISOM's deployment. At the close of the meeting, UKUN PolCouns Paul Johnston announced that the UK plans to put forward a PRST draft for consideration that would authorize the UN SYG to begin contingency planning for a UN PKO (ref B).

COMMENT

17. (C) France, Italy and Belgium are unlikely to push their opposition to a UN PKO aggressively if the AU delegations present a united position. We will need to work closely with their capitals and their delegations in New York to encourage them to lobby actively for the Council to support the Somali national reconciliation process.

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